

AUDIO-ON-DEMAND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMAbstract of the Disclosure

An audio-on-demand communication system provides real-time playback of audio
5 data transferred via telephone lines or other communication links. One or more audio
servers include memory banks which store compressed audio data. At the request of a user
at a subscriber PC, an audio server transmits the compressed audio data over the
communication link to the subscriber PC. The subscriber PC receives and decompresses
the transmitted audio data in less than real-time using only the processing power of the
10 CPU within the subscriber PC. According to one aspect of the present invention, high
quality audio data compressed according to lossless compression techniques is transmitted
together with normal quality audio data. According to another aspect of the present
invention, metadata, or extra data, such as text, captions, still images, etc., is transmitted
15 with audio data and is simultaneously displayed with corresponding audio data. The
audio-on-demand system also provides a table of contents indicating significant divisions
in the audio clip to be played and allows the user immediate access to audio data at the
listed divisions. According to a further aspect of the present invention, servers and
subscriber PCs are dynamically allocated based upon geographic location to provide the
highest possible quality in the communication link.

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